

location of the trailing edge is not embraced by the invention). However the invention contemplates any blade whose airfoil intercepts the endwall shock to bring the passage shock into coincidence with the endwall shock. For example, FIG. 5 illustrates an embodiment where a section of the tip region is displaced circumferentially (relative to the prior art blade) so that the blade intercepts the endwall shock 64 and brings it into coincidence with the passage shock 66. As with the embodiment of FIG. 3, the displaced section extends radially inward far enough to intercept the endwall shock over its entire radial extent and brings it into coincidence with the passage shock 66. This embodiment functions as effectively as the embodiment of FIG. 3 in terms of bringing the passage shock into coincidence with the endwall shock. However it suffers from the disadvantage that the airfoil tip is curled in the direction of rotation R. In the event that the blade tip contacts the rubstrip 46 during engine operation, the curled blade tip will gouge rather than abrade the rubstrip necessitating its replacement. Other alternative embodiments may also suffer from this or other disadvantages.

The invention's beneficial effects also apply to a blade having a forward swept airfoil. Referring to FIG. 6 and 7, a forward swept airfoil 122 according to the present invention has a leading edge 128, a trailing edge 130, a root 124 and a tip 126 located at a tip radius r_{tip} . An inner transition point 140 located at an inner transition radius $r_{i-inner}$ is the axially aftmost point on the leading edge. The leading edge of the airfoil is swept forward by a radially varying first sweep angle σ_1 in an intermediate region 70 of the airfoil. The intermediate region is radially bounded by the inner transition radius $r_{i-inner}$ and the outer transition radius $r_{o-outer}$. The first sweep angle $|\tau_1|$ is nondecreasing with increasing radius, i.e. the sweep angle increases, or at least does not decrease, with increasing radius.

The leading edge 128 of the airfoil is also swept forward by a radially varying second sweep angle σ_2 in a tip region 74 of the airfoil. The tip region is radially bounded by the outer transition radius $r_{o-outer}$ and the tip radius r_{tip} . The second sweep angle is nonincreasing (decreases, or at least does not increase) with increasing radius. This is in sharp contrast to the prior art airfoil 122' whose sweep angle increases with increasing radius radially outward of the inner transition radius.

In the forward swept embodiment of the invention, as in the swept back embodiment, the nonincreasing sweep angle σ_2 in the tip region 74 causes the endwall shock 64 to be coincident with the passage shock 66 for reducing the aerodynamic losses as discussed previously. This is in contrast to the prior art blade, shown in phantom where the endwall shock and the passage shock are distinct and therefore impose multiple aerodynamic losses on the working medium.

In the swept back embodiment of FIG. 2, the inner transition point is the axially forwardmost point on the leading edge. The leading edge is swept back at radii greater than the inner transition radius. The character of the leading edge sweep inward of the inner transition radius is not embraced by the invention. In the forward swept embodiment of FIG. 6, the inner transition point is the axially aftmost point on the leading edge. The leading edge is swept forward at radii greater than the inner transition radius. As with the swept back embodiment, the character of the leading edge sweep inward of the inner transition radius is not embraced by the invention. In both the forward swept

and back swept embodiments, the inner transition point is illustrated as being radially outward of the airfoil root. However the invention also comprehends a blade whose inner transition point (axially forwardmost point for the swept back embodiment and axially aftmost point for the forward swept embodiment) is radially coincident with the leading edge of the root. This is shown, for example, by the dotted leading edge 28" of FIG. 2.

The invention has been presented in the context of a fan blade for a gas turbine engine, however, the invention's applicability extends to any turbomachinery airfoil wherein flow passages between neighboring airfoils are subjected to multiple shocks.

We claim:

[1. A turbomachinery blade for a turbine engine having a cascade of blades rotatable about a rotational axis so that each blade in the cascade has a leading neighbor and a trailing neighbor, and each blade cooperates with its neighbors to define flow passages for a working medium gas, the blade cascade being circumscribed by a case and under some operational conditions an endwall shock extends a limited distance radially inward from the case and also extends axially and circumferentially across the flow passages, and a passage shock also extends across the flow passages, the turbomachinery blade including an airfoil having a leading edge, a trailing edge, a root, a tip and an inner transition point located at an inner transition radius radially inward of the tip, the blade characterized in that at least a portion of the leading edge radially outward of the inner transition point is swept and a section of the airfoil radially coextensive with the endwall shock extending from the leading neighbor intercepts the endwall shock so that the endwall shock and the passage shock are coincident.

2. A turbomachinery blade for a turbine engine having a cascade of blades rotatable about a rotational axis so that each blade in the cascade has a leading neighbor and a trailing neighbor, and each blade cooperates with its neighbors to define flow passages for a working medium gas, the blade cascade being circumscribed by a case and under some operational conditions an endwall shock extends a limited distance radially inward from the case and also extends axially and circumferentially across the flow passages and a passage shock also extends across the flow passages, the turbomachinery blade including an airfoil having a leading edge, a trailing edge, a root, a tip located at a tip radius, an inner transition point located at an inner transition radius radially inward of the tip, and an outer transition point at an outer transition radius radially intermediate the inner transition radius and the tip radius, the blade having a tip region bounded by the outer transition radius and the tip radius, and an intermediate region bounded by the inner transition radius and the outer transition radius, the blade characterized in that the leading edge is swept in the intermediate region at a first sweep angle which is generally nondecreasing with increasing radius, and the leading edge is swept over at least a portion of the tip region at a second sweep angle which is generally nonincreasing with increasing radius so that the section of the airfoil radially coextensive with the endwall shock extending from the leading neighbor intercepts the endwall shock so that the endwall shock and the passage shock are coincident.

3. The turbomachinery blade of claim 1 or 2 characterized in that the inner transition radius is coincident with the root at the leading edge of the blade.]

4. A fan stage of a ducted gas turbine engine that is at least in part rotatable about an axis of rotation, comprising:

a fan casing that defines an inner duct wall having a fan rotor region, the inner duct wall of the fan casing at the fan rotor region being convergent;

a hub disposed concentrically relative to the fan casing;

a fan rotor that includes multiple swept fan blades, the swept fan blades being spaced apart around the hub, each of the multiple swept fan blades having:

a tip profile that substantially corresponds to the convergent inner duct wall of the fan casing;

a leading edge that defines a variable sweep angle in a direction perpendicular to the axis of rotation, the leading edge including:

an inner region adjacent the hub, the inner region defining a forward sweep angle;

an intermediate region between the inner region and the fan casing, the intermediate region defining a rearward sweep angle; and

an outer region between the intermediate region and the fan casing, the outer region being translated forward.

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5. A fan stage of a ducted gas turbine engine that is at least in part rotatable about an axis of rotation, comprising:

a fan casing that defines an inner duct wall having a fan rotor region, the inner duct wall of the fan casing at the fan rotor region being convergent;

a hub disposed concentrically relative to the fan casing;

a fan rotor that includes multiple swept fan blades, the swept fan blades being spaced apart around the hub, each of the multiple swept fan blades having:

a tip profile that is convergent so as to substantially correspond to the convergent inner duct wall of the fan casing;

a leading edge that defines a variable sweep angle in a direction perpendicular to the axis of rotation, the leading edge including:

an inner region adjacent the hub, the inner region defining a forward sweep angle;

an intermediate region between the inner region and the fan casing, the intermediate region defining a rearward sweep angle; and

an outer region between the intermediate region and the fan casing, the outer region being translated forward.

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6. A fan stage of a ducted gas turbine engine that is at least in part rotatable about an axis of rotation, comprising:

a fan casing that defines an inner duct wall having a fan rotor region, the inner duct wall of the fan casing at the fan rotor region being convergent;

a hub disposed concentrically relative to the fan casing;

a fan rotor that includes multiple swept fan blades, the swept fan blades being spaced apart around the hub, each of the multiple swept fan blades having:

a tip profile that substantially corresponds to the convergent inner duct wall of the fan casing;

a leading edge that defines a variable sweep angle in a direction perpendicular to the axis of rotation, the leading edge including:

an inner region adjacent the hub, the inner region defining a forward sweep angle;

an intermediate region between the inner region and the fan casing, the intermediate region defining a rearward sweep angle; and

an outer region between the intermediate region and the fan casing, the outer region defining a forward sweep angle.

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a fan rotor including a multiplicity of swept fan blades spaced apart around a hub mounted concentrically with respect to the fan duct, each of said swept fan blades having (i) a tip profile which in revolution substantially corresponds to the convergent duct wall, (ii) a leading edge of variable sweep angle which varies with increasing blade height or distance from the axis of rotation, said sweep angle having a forward sweep angle in a first height region between the root and a first intermediate radius, a rearward sweep angle in an intermediate height region between the first intermediate radius and a second intermediate radius, and a sweep angle in a third height region between the second intermediate radius and the tip of the blade such that said third height region is translated forward, and (iii) a stagger angle which increases progressively with blade height.

8. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine,
comprising:

a fan casing having an inner duct wall which in a fan rotor region is convergent in the downstream direction; and

a fan rotor including a multiplicity of swept fan blades spaced apart around a hub mounted concentrically with respect to the fan duct, each of said swept fan blades having (i) a tip profile which in revolution is convergent so as to substantially correspond to the convergent duct wall, (ii) a leading edge of variable sweep angle which varies with increasing blade height or distance from the axis of rotation, said sweep angle having a forward sweep angle in a first height region between the root and a first intermediate radius, a rearward sweep angle in an intermediate height region between the first intermediate radius and a second intermediate radius, and a sweep angle in a third height region between the second intermediate radius and the tip of the blade such that said third height region is translated forward, and (iii) a stagger angle which increases progressively with blade height.

9. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine, comprising:

a fan casing having an inner duct wall which in a fan rotor region is convergent in the downstream direction; and

a fan rotor including a multiplicity of swept fan blades spaced apart around a hub mounted concentrically with respect to the fan duct, each of said swept fan blades having (i) a tip profile which in revolution substantially corresponds to the convergent duct wall, (ii) a leading edge of variable sweep angle which varies with increasing blade height or distance from the axis of rotation, said sweep angle having a forward sweep angle in a first height region between the root and a first intermediate radius, a rearward sweep angle in an intermediate height region between the first intermediate radius and a second intermediate radius, and a forward sweep angle in a third height region between the second intermediate radius and the tip of the blade, and (iii) a stagger angle which increases progressively with blade height.

10. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine, comprising

a fan casing having an inner duct wall which in a fan rotor region is convergent in the downstream direction; and

a fan rotor including a multiplicity of swept fan blades spaced apart around a hub mounted concentrically with respect to the fan duct, each of said swept fan blades having a tip profile which in revolution is convergent so as to substantially

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correspond to the convergent duct wall, a leading edge of variable sweep angle which varies with increasing blade height or distance from the axis of rotation, said sweep angle having a forward sweep angle in a first height region between the root and a first intermediate radius, a rearward sweep angle in an intermediate height region between the first intermediate radius and a second intermediate radius, a forward sweep angle in a third height region between the second intermediate radius and the tip of the blade, a stagger angle which increases progressively with blade height.

11. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 10 wherein the blade has a tip region of about 24% of blade height characterized in that the stagger angle increases to less than 90° at the tip relative to the airflow direction.

12. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 11 wherein in a blade tip region of about 24% of the height of the blade the sweep of the leading edge changes from rearward sweep to forward sweep.

13. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 11 wherein in a blade tip region of about 24% of the height of the blade the sweep of the leading edge decreases.

14. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 13 wherein the blade is further characterized in that the stagger angle of the mid-height region of the blade is a predetermined fraction of the stagger angle at the tip region.

15. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 10 wherein the sweep angle of the leading edge of a swept fan blade at a point on the leading edge is less than the complement of the angle of a Mach cone at any other point on the leading edge of the blade at greater radius from the root.

16. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 10 wherein the shape of the pressure surface of a swept fan blade and the suction surface thereof creates, in use, a line of minimum static pressure points on the suction surface of the blade, said line of minimum static pressure points is inclined with respect to the axial direction at a sweep angle which varies with span height of the blade, and has a negative value in a region of subsonic flow over the leading edge.

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17. A fan stage of a ducted fan gas turbine engine as claimed in claim 16 wherein the sweep angle of the line of minimum pressure points at a point on the line is less than the complement of the angle of a Mach cone at any other point on the line.

18. A fan stage of a ducted gas turbine engine that is at least in part rotatable about an axis of rotation and defines a downstream direction along the axis of rotation, comprising:

a fan casing that defines an inner duct wall having a fan rotor region, the inner duct wall of the fan casing at the fan rotor region being convergent;

a hub disposed concentrically relative to the fan casing;

a fan rotor that includes multiple swept fan blades, the swept fan blades being spaced apart around the hub, each of the multiple swept fan blades having:

a tip profile that is convergent so as to substantially correspond to the convergent inner duct wall of the fan casing;

a leading edge that defines a variable sweep angle in a direction perpendicular to the axis of rotation, the leading edge including:

an inner region adjacent the hub, the inner region defining a forward sweep angle;

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an intermediate region between the inner region and the fan casing, the intermediate region defining a rearward sweep angle; and

an outer region between the intermediate region and the fan casing, the outer region defining a forward sweep angle.

19. The fan stage according to claim 18, wherein the intermediate region extends further than the inner region along the axis of rotation.

20. The fan stage according to claim 18, wherein the inner duct wall of the fan casing at the fan rotor region is substantially convergent in the downstream direction.

21. The fan stage according to claim 18, wherein the tip profile of the multiple swept fan blades are substantially convergent in the downstream direction.

22. The fan stage according to claim 18, wherein each of the multiple swept fan blades includes a hub contacting surface that extends further than the tip profile along the axis of rotation.

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